United Nations A/ES-10/621–S/2014/205

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
21 March 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 20 March 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

As intense international efforts continue to advance the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its gross violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and persists with its illegal colonization campaign throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Such illegal and destructive actions are hastening the decline of conditions on the ground and poisoning the atmosphere required for the conduct of credible, substantive negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

Palestinian children continue to be targeted by the Israeli occupying forces, which continue to act with excessive and brutal force and blatant disregard for human life. Yesterday, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, Yousef Nayif Al Shawamreh, was shot and murdered near the village of Dura, south of Al-Khalil, where he and other youths had been foraging for local plants in an area near the wall. The occupying forces arrested the two youths who were with him and have yet to release the body of yet another innocent Palestinian victim of such senseless violence.

We reiterate here the obligations incumbent upon Israel, as the occupying Power, in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, towards the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation. Under the law, our people are entitled to protection for their lives, welfare and safety. Yet, Israel persists with its wanton behaviour, in grave breach of international law, deliberately and systematically perpetrating acts of violence and human rights violations against the Palestinian people and flagrantly disregarding all norms and standards for the protection of the civilian population.

In this regard, in only the period since the resumption of peace negotiations in late July 2013, the Israeli occupying forces have killed 57 Palestinians and injured

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897 other civilians. There have also been more than 500 attacks by settlers on Palestinian civilians and their properties. Moreover, in the same period, the occupying forces have carried out over 3,767 military raids throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and arrested more than 3,000 Palestinians, including children. In this regard, we must once again draw attention to the critical human rights situation of the more than 5,000 Palestinians who remain captive in Israeli prisons and detention centres. We underscore the plight of eight prisoners who are currently on hunger strike in protest of their administrative detention, five of whom are currently in Israeli hospitals. All such illegal Israeli measures must be firmly condemned and Israel must respect the law and comply with all of its obligations without exception. Making peace demands this, and the principles of the human rights and dignity of peoples demand this.

At the same time, Israel has carried on with its settlement activities in Occupied Palestine, in grave breach of international law and in total contradiction to the peace process and the objective of realizing the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. In the past week alone, Israeli officials have announced plans for the construction of more than 1,000 more settlement units, including in Occupied East Jerusalem.

This includes announcements of plans to expand the "Ramot" settlement in East Jerusalem by 734 units and the "Ramat Shlomo" settlement in the same area by 389 units, which would further isolate the city from the Palestinian villages to the west. In addition, plans were advanced today for the construction of another 186 units, including in the settlements of "Pisgat Ze'ev" (40 units) and at "Har Homa" (140 units), in Jabal Abu Ghneim in Occupied East Jerusalem.

The fact is that Israel has declared its intent to proceed with more than 11,000 units in just the period since negotiations began. The decisions to proceed with such illegal actions not only seriously undermine the peace process and Israel's credibility in this regard, but are directly and physically harming the prospects for realization of the two-State solution. With every settlement unit and every action taken to further entrench this illegal Israeli colonization network, the contiguity of Palestinian land is undermined and the viability of the two-State solution is gravely diminished.

Moreover, Israel continues its provocations and illegal measures at and around holy sites in Occupied East Jerusalem, particularly at Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Severe restrictions continue to be enforced on access and freedom of worship by Palestinians, with the occupying Power preventing anyone under the age of 40 from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the recent period, further isolating it, emptying it of its worshippers and preventing students from reaching schools in the area. Israel's illegal excavations under the compound also continue unabated. At the same time, settler groups and other extremists continue to be permitted entry to the compound and persist with their threats of mal-intent regarding the Mosque, amounting to grave incitement and resulting in rising tensions.

All such actions are endangering the foundations and sanctity of the compound, stirring religious emotions and destabilizing the situation. This is a matter of utmost seriousness to which we continue to appeal to the international community, including the Security Council, to give immediate attention. Israel must be compelled to cease all its provocations and illegal actions, to act to promote calm and to commit to peace. We are at a pivotal juncture in the search for peace, both in

terms of the political process and the conditions on the ground, in which respect for international law would greatly contribute to a de-escalation of tensions and the advancement of peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 489 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 12 March 2014 (A/ES-10/620-S/2014/180), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations